

Complaints Procedure

Produced by the Quality Department
www.wigan-leigh.ac.uk

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COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The College believes it is in everyone's interest to resolve complaints as quickly as possible, as close to the source of the problem as possible, and where appropriate by informal means in preference to formal ones.
- 1.2 The College aims to ensure that all complaints received are dealt with promptly, fairly, professionally and in a non-discriminatory manner.
- 1.3 The College aims to ensure appropriate action is taken to resolve issues and will endeavour where appropriate to prevent similar occurrences.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to complaints from any student, former student or external stakeholder who wishes to express dissatisfaction with an aspect of the College's activities.
 - 2.2 Any allegation made against a member of staff/volunteer regarding abuse will be dealt with under the Safeguarding Children Policy or the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.
 - 2.3 Other policies and procedures that work in conjunction with the Complaints procedure are: Staff Grievance Policy, Safeguarding Children Policy, Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, Fees Policy, Academic Appeals procedure, Internal/External Assessment policies including appeals and Student Disciplinary Procedures. Complaints may be dealt with under any of these policies and procedures as the College considers appropriate in the circumstances.
 - 2.4 A complaint must be made within 3 months of the event that gave rise to it.
 - 2.5 The College endeavours to deliver high standards at all times to its students and stakeholders. Students, former students and stakeholders may complain about any aspects of the College's activities.
 - 2.6 The College reserves the right not to investigate complaints it considers to be Vexatious or malicious at any stage. If the College deems this to be the case, the complainant will be informed in writing. Making of vexatious or malicious complaints could result in disciplinary action.
 - 2.7 The College will not normally deal with anonymous complaints and will do so only exceptionally at the College's discretion.
 - 2.8 If interviews are deemed necessary, the investigating officer may have another member of staff present in all meetings with the parties involved.
 - 2.9 College staff have the right to terminate any meeting or interview if they feel that the behaviour of any of the parties is inappropriate.
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3. **PROCEDURE**

3.1 **Stage 1 - Informal stage**

3.2 It is expected that day-to-day concerns will be raised and resolved promptly and informally between a complainant and his/her subject tutor, personal tutor or other appropriate member of staff.

3.3 **Stage 2 – Formal Stage**

3.4 When it is felt that an issue has not been resolved satisfactorily at the informal stage, or is of a sufficiently serious or complex nature that it should be dealt with formally, a complainant should submit his/her complaint, in writing, on the appropriate form (Appendix 1) to a member of College staff. The complaint will then be forwarded to the Head of Quality.

3.5 The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 3 working days of its receipt by the Head of Quality. It will then be forwarded to the appropriate Executive Team member who will appoint an appropriate manager/member of staff to investigate and determine the complaint. After investigating and determining the complaint, a written response with reasons will be sent to the complainant.

3.6 The complainant may be invited to meet with a manager or member of College staff in an effort to resolve the complaint.

3.7 **Stage 3 - Appeal Stage**

3.8 If your complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction at Stage 2, you may seek to appeal the decision by sending a written request for appeal to the Head of Quality, within 5 working days of the date of the College's decision at Stage 2. Your request must be based on one or more of the following grounds, that:

- the complaint procedure was not followed
- new material evidence has come to light which was not reasonably available at the time of the complaint investigation
- the outcome of the complaint was unreasonable

3.9 The appeal request will normally be acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt by the Head of Quality.

3.10 If it is determined by a member of the Executive Team that none of the above grounds are disclosed, the College will not further consider your complaint at Stage 3.

- 3.11 If it is determined by a member of the Executive Team that one or more of the above grounds are disclosed in your request for an appeal, you will be invited to submit detailed information in support of your appeal, including an indication of the resolution or outcome you are seeking, and to provide copies of all documents upon which you wish to rely as part of your appeal. The appeal will be considered and determined, normally on paper, by the nominated member of the Executive team.

The nominated member of the Executive team will determine an outcome which may include overturning the Stage 2 decision (in whole or in part) or upholding the original decision at Stage 2.

- 3.12 If a review meeting is required, you may be accompanied and/or represented by a fellow student or family member. You may not be accompanied or represented by a legal representative. You must confirm to the College the identity of your proposed companion at least five working days before the date of the meeting.
- 3.13 Following an appeal being considered and concluded by a nominated member of the Executive team, You will be notified in writing, with reasons, of the decision made on your appeal. This will normally be within 10 working days. This decision is final and there will be no further right of appeal within the College.

4. **Stage 4 - External complaints**

- 4.1 If you remain dissatisfied following your complaint being considered at Stage 3 of the complaints procedure then you may be able to raise a complaint with the Skills Funding Agency by:

- Sending your complaint to: Complaints Team, Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT
- E-mailing your complaint to complaintsteam@sfa.bis.gov.uk

Further information relating to the Skills Funding Agency's complaints procedure is available via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure>

- 4.2 If you are a student studying on a NEBOSH programme and you remain dissatisfied following your complaint being considered at Stage 3 of the complaints procedure, you may be able to escalate your complaint to NEBOSH. Information regarding the NEBOSH Complaints procedure is available at www.nebosh.org.uk At the conclusion of the NEBOSH complaints process, you can seek regulatory advice from SQA Accreditation. Information regarding SQA Accreditation is available at <http://accreditation.sqa.org.uk>

- 4.3 If you are a student studying on a higher education programme, you might be able to complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (<http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>).

You might also be able to use a partner university's complaints procedure to pursue a complaint. Please contact the Head of Quality for guidance and further information in this regard.

5. **Monitoring Quality Assurance and Control**

5.1 The Head of Quality will monitor the overall operation of the procedure to ensure that it is effective.

Appendix 1 - Complaint Form (CF1)

To be completed by the Complainant	
Full Name	Contact Address
Telephone Number	Course of Study
Email Address	

Please describe the steps you have taken to resolve your complaint informally.

Please give clear and precise details of your complaint? (Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

What would you consider to be an acceptable outcome

Are you: A Student Representing a group of students Former Student
 A Parent/Guardian External stakeholder

Signature _____ Student signature (if form completed by a representative) _____ Date _____

To be completed by the person logging the complaint		
Form received by (please print):	Department	Date
Copy sent to (name of manager dealing with the complaint)	Department	Date
Date copy sent to Head of Quality		